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*Scottish Journal of Performance*

Volume 1, Issue 1; December 2013

ISSN: 2054-1953 (Print) / ISSN: 2054-1961 (Online)

Publication details: <http://www.scottishjournalofperformance.org>

**To cite this article:** Tsitsou, L. and Weir, L., 2013. Re-reading Mary Wigman's *Hexentanz II* (1926): the influence of the non-Western 'Other' on movement practice in early modern 'German' dance. *Scottish Journal of Performance*, 1(1), pp.53–74.

**To link to this article:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.14439/sjop.2013.0101.04>



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# **Re-reading Mary Wigman's *Hexentanz II* (1926): the influence of the non-Western 'Other' on movement practice in early modern 'German' dance**

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DOI: 10.14439/sjop.2013.0101.04  
Publication date: 13 December 2013

*This paper provides a re-reading of Mary Wigman's Hexentanz II ('Witch Dance', 1926), emphasising the social and aesthetic conditions in which she created dance works. A renewed interest in the idea of a return to nature characterised the artistic mood of this period, and scholars conceive of this return as an antidote to the capitalist modernisation of Germany and the effects of the First World War. This paper views Wigman's work as a prominent example of the reversion to 'primitive' forms as a means of devising a new, avant-garde creative practice. The witch's dance indicates a return to 'primitive ritualism', which is linked to the construction of the non-Western 'Other' as authentic and pure. Hexentanz II drew on various non-Western cultural elements, which became crystallised into a new technique and style of movement. However, as Edward Said (1978) would argue, such cultural elements are utilised for the benefit of the West and the construction of a modern dance more widely, a fraction of which would be gradually fabricated as 'German'.*

**Keywords:** *historical sociology of dance, Mary Wigman, Hexentanz II*

## Introduction

The development of early twentieth century modern dance was informed by a complex nexus of processes characterised both by anti-balletic tendencies as well as a return to basic cultural practices such as folk and quasi-religious ritual performance. Such practices were often mediated by representations of the Oriental 'Other', which were used to construct an art form that was viewed as distinctively national, and, in this case, 'German'. In this paper, we centre our argument on the case study of Mary Wigman's *Hexentanz II* (1926), positing that this seminal work was a prominent example of a social and aesthetic process by which the exotic becomes a vehicle for the construction of national and nationalist forms of modern dance.

Susan Manning (1991; 1993) is a leading authority on Wigman's work whose studies highlight the shifting social and aesthetic conditions in which Wigman operated, analysing works from her earliest choreographies to the post-war period. Manning (1993) placed great emphasis on the intersection of nationalism and feminism, which, as she argues, characterised Wigman's work in the period of the Third Reich (1933-1945). Her study takes into account dance works that Wigman produced throughout the Nazi ascendance to power, highlighting her trajectory and survival as an artist. Karina and Kant (2003) have examined Wigman's alliance with the Nazi regime, identifying elements in her work that they argue reflect state ideology. Howe (1996) discusses Wigman's oeuvre from a philosophical-artistic perspective, focusing on individuality, artistic expression and embodied transcendence. Shorter studies (Banes, 1998; Burt, 1998) discuss other aspects of Wigman's choreography including ritualistic, Oriental dances such as *Monotonie: Drehtanz* ('Monotony: Whirl Dance', 1928) and *Hexentanz II*, as well as the occultist elements of her work. Dee Reynolds (2007, p.52) also notes the 'strong Oriental influence' on Wigman's early works

such as *Opfer* ('Sacrifice': part of the Ecstatic Dances cycle, 1919).

Evidently, elements of Wigman's oeuvre have thus far been considered 'Oriental' and discussed in the context of nationalism. However, Wigman's choreographic trajectory poses questions about a change in her work from the Oriental to the nationalist. This paper rationalises such a shift by arguing that *Hexentanz II* marks the beginning of a wider symbolic and Orientalist process embedded in dance production of the period. This process refers to the ritualistic presence of the 'Other' in dance, but also to the way in which non-Western material becomes a vehicle for the production of a 'German' modern dance more widely.

Said (1978) argued that the appropriation of the 'Other' for the benefit of the West is at the core of Orientalist practice. However, the outcome of this process involves Wigman's participation in the production of dance in the Nazi period. As we shall show, the trajectory from the non-Western to the nationalist is homologous to a wider social process of state formation and social change in Germany. Thus, this paper provides a re-reading of the making of *Hexentanz II*, drawing on the social history of the period in question in order to present a new history of the dance that specifically examines the conditions of artistic production, with the aim of uncovering the relationship between wider social/historical processes and artistic endeavours.

### **Ritualism and Said's Orientalism**

This paper is a product of interdisciplinary collaboration, linked to two separate studies on modern dance; the first was a sociological investigation of the conditions of possibility of Western theatrical dance, while the other

focused on aesthetics of cultural exchange in the works of Mary Wigman, Martha Graham and Pina Bausch, based on archival collections and primary sources<sup>1</sup>. Consequently, this paper will apply socio-historical and anthropological perspectives to the discussion of *Hexentanz II* and 'German' dance more widely.

This paper employs a Saidian analysis of *Hexentanz II*. Said (1978, p.325) argued that inaccurate, romanticised versions of the Orient—what he terms 'latent Orientalism'—are, in fact, harmful rather than innocuous tropes, stating that: 'The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also [...] one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other'. This 'Other' has both stereotypical positive and negative attributes; it is both the exoticised (and frequently sexualised) Orient of literature and the imagination (Said, 1993). Said (1989) explores the representation of colonised populations in literature as expressive of the oppressive relationship between the West and the East. As he explains, before the Second World War, the 'colonised' constituted those non-Western and non-European populations 'that have been controlled and often settled forcibly by Europeans' (Said, 1989, p.206). These populations are represented as the opposite of the West, namely primitive, inferior, mysterious, and potentially threatening, yet in certain respects maintaining a kind of primal purity (Said, 1978, p.115).

Thus, Orientalism constitutes a demonising process, one of creating distance from the inferior, but also a process of exoticising and valorising the non-Western 'Other' for the benefit of the West. In this paper, we explore this duality (which we call 'demonising' and 'valorising' respectively) in relation to Wigman's *Hexentanz II*, reflecting on the making of new dance in Germany more broadly in the early modern period. Broadly speaking, Orientalist representations of the 'Other' draw thematically on 'an essentialist conceptions of

countries, peoples and nations [...] expressed through a characterized ethnist typology' (Said, 1978, p.97). As such, Orientalism refers to a set of assumptions embedded in the representation of the 'Other', which, as anthropology has shown, is constructed rather than encountered (Fabian, 1990, p.755).

Orientalism and dance have been at the centre of academic debate, with scholars arguing for the strongly Orientalist and sexualised character of both ballet and modern dance (Desmond, 1997; Koritz, 1995; 1997; Martin, 1997), and others arguing against the Saidian idea (Burt, 1998; Copeland, 1996). Burt (1998, p.165) sees the Orientalist tendencies in dance as an empathetic process, one by which the self becomes the 'Other'. He argues that works such as those of Mary Wigman, Martha Graham and Katherine Dunham often did not reflect fixed divisions between the primitive and the modern, but rather such divisions were dynamic and fluid. Indeed, this was an idea adopted by a series of Modernist dance makers; Martin (1997, p.328) contends in response to this argumentation that Modernism as an aesthetic movement tended to psychologise the appropriation of the 'Other', replacing it with an aestheticised self-appropriation, thus concealing the power relations in dance representation. Our article aims to contribute to this latter interpretation, highlighting the Orientalist practices underlying Wigman's process in making *Hexentanz II*.

This paper also explores the influence of ritualism in dance production, which is particularly prominent in the case of *Hexentanz II*. Catherine Bell (1992, p.43) posits that:

rituals [...] communicate [...] and it is through this function that [they] indirectly affect social realities and perceptions of those realities. However, when performance theory attempts to explain such communication it must fall back on ritual activity as depicting, modelling, enacting or dramatising what are seen as prior conceptual ideas and values.

Bell (1992, p.16) argues that ritual is 'a type of critical juncture wherein some pair of opposing social or cultural forces comes together'. These definitions concur with Said's thematic Orientalism as a preconception, while the processes of distancing and admiring further reflect, as we shall see, Wigman's own conception of *Hexentanz II* as ecstatic ritual.

*Hexentanz II* links this ethnist ritualistic performance with demonic behaviours, thus ascribing a new meaning to the dance. As Schechner and Appel (1990, p.24) explain, this is in fact a wider function:

Ethnologically, rituals are certain behavioural displacements, exaggerations, repetitions, and transformations that communicate and/or symbolize meanings not ordinarily associated with the behaviour displayed.

These theoretical perspectives are useful for analysing *Hexentanz II* as a ritualistic work, one whose elements are drawn from the same kind of ethnist typology we have defined. As we shall show, *Hexentanz II* itself reflects this dual demonising/valorising process, and posits certain questions for understanding the making of this piece.

## Context

By the turn of the twentieth century, the presence of the 'Other' in dance was hardly a new concept. Ritualistic themes appeared in Romantic ballet, characterised by mythological archetypes such as Sylphs and Willis (otherworldly beings with magical powers) that dominated works like *Giselle* (1841) and *La Sylphide* (1836) (Garafola, 1997; Mackrell, 1997). Ritualism became part of the balletic tradition that further informed the practices of the Modernist enterprise of Sergei Diaghilev's Ballet Russes, such as *L'Après midi d'un faune* (1912) and *Le Sacre du printemps* (1913). Similarly, Loie Fuller and Isadora Duncan incorporated ritualistic elements into their avant-garde dance works (Koritz, 1995; 1997).

However, this artistic turn to the 'Other' began with the appropriation of Continental folk dances (see Arkin and Smith, 1997), what in retrospect we label as national dances, and further with the appropriation of Eastern dances (Egyptian and Arabic) as ritualistic, primitive, and often sensual. Folk dances expressed what Johann Gottfried Herder (Adler and Koepke, 2009) referred to as *Volksgeist*; namely, they were seen to encapsulate the suppressed spirit of people living under imperial dominion (Banes, 1998; Garafola, 1998). At the same time, Eastern/Oriental dances were used to represent the spirit of the Orient as the West conceived it; Michel Fokine made use of both in his works with the Russian Imperial Ballet. Evidently, a return to folk tradition and ritual as a means to formulating a new movement vocabulary underpinned the aesthetic development of dance at this time.

More specifically, German *Ausdruckstanz* (expressive dance) and other avant-garde forms that preceded this movement were indicative of the fragmentation of ballet into different styles and forms, enforced by symbolic and aesthetic trends that were often internally antagonistic,



what Bourdieu (1996, p.225) calls symbolic oppositions<sup>2</sup>. The birth of modern dance in Germany was a bid for autonomy from political power and struggle for the legitimacy of new styles of movement<sup>3</sup>. Modern dance developed in contradistinction to balletic production; namely, its evolution took place outside the institutions that validated the classical form, such as the state operas and municipal or royal theatres. The conditions of dance production were challenged in this new model and a significant shift took place towards what is now termed freelancing and private enterprise. Primary examples of this were Diaghilev's Ballets Russes and Rolf de Marè's Ballets Suédois (Garafola, 2005). This move indicated a new autonomy in dance making, as content and style were not prescribed or determined by power. Furthermore, modern dance was also anti-balletic in terms of its movement and narrative (or abstract) content.

Mary Wigman was a dance maker whose work was also heavily influenced by these structural changes, in a social, political and aesthetic environment characterised by modernisation and capitalist advancement. Born to an upper middle-class family in Hanover in 1886, she resolved to become a professional dancer relatively late in life, in her mid-twenties (Howe, 1996, p.96). She explored alternative methods of creating dance to the dominant form of ballet outwith theatrical structures. Her experimentations with improvisation and free movement reflected the widespread popularity of body culture movements in Germany at the turn of the century (Manning, 1993).

These phenomena were a response to the rapid industrialisation and urbanisation of Germany and the perceived repressive character of the city and reflected a need for healthier lifestyles through a return to nature, which intensified in the years following the First World War. Organised communities operating around non-hierarchical

structures and anti-capitalist ideologies aimed to cultivate a new form of habitus<sup>4</sup>; namely, new dispositions towards social and political life cultivated physical performance in nature. The emphasis on physical culture stood for a new understanding of human physicality, signifying the end of absolutist control over the body through etiquette. This was expressed through the abolition of corsets and brassieres, which liberated the female body in particular, and became a cultural ideal (Carter, 2011; Toepfer, 2003). As Fensham (2011, pp.3–4) explains, ideas about nature as a form of escape or consolation to the mechanised, chaotic, capitalist modern world were a Romantic construction. Discourses of naturalism and dance, which drew heavily on philosophical and scientific ideas of the period (see Darwinist theory), constructed nature as a recurring force ‘regarded as transcendently beautiful, but occasionally overwhelming’ (Fensham, 2011, p.4).

Wigman studied in these new conditions, as we shall see. Initially, she studied rhythmic gymnastics with Émile-Jaques Dalcroze in Hellerau. Dalcroze encouraged group exercise and placed emphasis on movement as a means to a healthy lifestyle (Manning, 1993, p.52). However, Dalcroze’s institute did not offer the kind of expressive potential Wigman was seeking. Thus, she went to Ascona, Switzerland following the advice of her friend Emil Nolde to find Rudolf Laban at the movement school he operated on Monte Verità. This alternative institution, centred on communal living and immersion in the creative arts, promised an alternative to bourgeois urban life. Ritual was an integral part of the colony’s practice, an indication of a return to traditional cultural elements. Laban orchestrated openair physical performances with a quasi-religious ritualistic character, such as the Sun Festival of 1917, an all-day performance of ritualistic dance works in which Wigman played a major role (Manning, 1993, p.78). Ritualism became a common element in dance making in these first decades of the twentieth century, evident even in the work of Isadora

Duncan and Ruth St. Denis, who coupled their teaching of free movement and improvisation with elements of theosophy and religion while emphasising the importance of nature (Tomko, 2004).

Wigman drew on these experiences in order to develop a dance technique of her own which was distinctly anti-balletic. She performed barefoot and experimented with dances performed to spoken word accompaniment, percussion, or even in silence. Wigman's choreography drew on various pre-constructed ideas about the non-Western 'Other' as primitive and/or demonic, manifested primarily through the archetype of the Witch in *Hexentanz II*. This expanded interest in non-Western sources could be interpreted as a search for purity in creative output. Jill Lloyd (in Hiller 1991, p.96) argued that 'a search for authenticity' inspired the desire to look beyond Western frameworks of reference in art. However, this aesthetic became a vehicle for national/nationalist conceptions of modern dance.

### ***Hexentanz II: a case study***

Of the many solo works she choreographed, Wigman is most readily associated with a 1926 revision of her 1914 piece, *Hexentanz*. She debuted as a dancer and choreographer on 11 February 1914 at the Museum des Porzia-Palais in Munich, presenting *Hexentanz I* ('Witch Dance') and an early version of *Lento* without musical accompaniment (Müller, 1986, p.36). *Hexentanz I* survives only in a handful of photographs. This very early solo was strikingly different to Wigman's reworked and more famous second version of 1926; the 1914 piece was an adaptation of Dalcroze's *Orpheus and Eurydice* (Manning, 1993, p.77). Wigman's costume was a simple piece of plain material, her legs and feet were left bare, and, unlike the 1926 revision, she wore

no mask. Ernst Scheyer (1970, p.20) observed that the original piece was 'rather angular-Gothic, reminding one of the grotesque "Mooriska Dances" (1480) of Erasmus Grasser'. Dee Reynolds (2007, p.52) claims that at its Munich première, the solo received 'thunderous applause'.

In contrast to the minimal documentation of *Hexentanz I*, *Hexentanz II* is recorded by a large volume of staged photographs, as well as a short film of Wigman performing the piece<sup>5</sup>. Throughout this excerpt (which shows only the first two minutes of the solo), Wigman is seated on the floor. However, as the percussion pace builds, she rocks violently from side to side. It is a truly startling piece, one that generates a particularly unsettling effect paired with the jerky soundtrack of alternating cymbal-crashes and pregnant silence. Contemporary critics were fascinated; in 1933, Rudolf Bach (1933, p.27) wrote that *Hexentanz II* was: 'perhaps Mary Wigman's most distinguished work, perhaps one of the peaks of her art'. Wolfgang Schumann (1931, p.45) stated:

Wigman's dance 'Witch' recalls the Middle Ages and her dance 'Sorceress' recreates a primitive civilization; yet each is above and beyond its theme a comparison in time and space [...] In spite of her modernity Mary Wigman suggests, particularly in her masked dances, at once the fierce intensity of the savage, and the superhumanity of the Greek tragic dancer.

The break from ballet technique in this work was also startling; there was a sense of weightiness in *Hexentanz II* completely oppositional to the ethereal quality of classical dance. At points, Wigman seemed almost stuck to the floor, dragging herself across the stage with a deliberate lack of grace. Dianne Howe (1985, p.152) even called the filmed excerpt of *Hexentanz II* 'one long scream'.

Charlotte Rudolf's photographs of *Hexentanz II* are strongly reminiscent of Noh drama, and Sally Banes (1998, pp.132–134) has analysed the piece in relation to the mie poses of Kabuki theatre. The mask and brocade costume in *Hexentanz II* were an approximation of Japanese traditions, like Kabuki and Noh, devised and performed in a Western dance context. Wigman's geographical proximity to the Dresden ethnological museum might explain her familiarity with the costumes of Japanese theatre, if not necessarily its artistic conventions (Scheyer, 1970, p.20).

Introduced to the use of primitivist masks by the Zurich Dada group (Manning, 1993, p.71), Wigman developed a personal interest in Noh theatre masks, and in particular the deliberate separation between masked 'character' and performer. Wigman's mask in particular lent the 1926 performance a sense of dread that was inextricably tied to the threatening potential of the 'Other'. Wigman (1966, p.42) noted that she was compelled to perform this Oriental ritual dance, clothed in a mask that seemed to have a life of its own:

The *Witch Dance* mask possessed its own personal life. Every movement of the body evoked a changed expression of the face; depending on the position of the head, the eyes seemed to close or to open. As a matter of fact, even around the mouth—intimated with a few strokes of the brush—there seemed to play a smile which, in its unfathomableness, was reminiscent of the Sphinx.

Howe (1996, p.124/128) explains that the mask 'completed the stylization for a harsh [...] mood' and that it represented the 'horror of witchness'. A clear link is established between the possessing, demonic character of the mask and the non-Western elements from which it was constructed. Wigman's use of Noh theatre masks represented the direct influence of non-Western sources on European avant-garde

performance; Olga Taxidou (2007, p.118) argues that Far Eastern theatre traditions have shaped the development of Modernist performance in the West, and that these cross-cultural dialogues are 'central to the whole process of redefinition and retheatricalisation of the theatre'.

### **Issues of nationalism and the non-Western 'Other'**

Andrew Hewitt (2005, pp.44–49) situates the making of new dance throughout this period into a system of practices and discourses—including philosophical and political thought—which negotiated materialism as the plague of social progress, what he terms 'a Romantic anti-capitalism'. The turn to primitive ritualism mediated by images of the 'Other' serves exactly this purpose, encapsulating the pure and the authentic, something that is not corrupted by interest, politics or war. The popularity of ritualistic elements in dance performance exemplified Jung's idea that ritual can invoke memories of a collective common past and of a common human condition, based on which there can be a sense of universal renewal. Indeed, this reversion to the primordial element signified a new start, which was in some sense almost a historical necessity after the horrors of the First World War; in that respect, the 'turn' we speak of is simultaneously a re-turn.

However, this 'turn' represents a double-edged sword for analysis of dance production in this period. As Said (1978) also argues, the construction of the 'Other' as the opposite of the West is simultaneously a valorising and demonising process. On one hand, the turn to the 'Other' exemplifies the need for a return to authentic, traditionalist practices as a means for renewal; ritualism, 'Othering' and primitivism in early Modernist dance reflected this desire for new forms of being and, as such, it becomes a valorising process. However, this kind of 'turn' is performed through pre-

constructed ideas about the 'Other' as underdeveloped, primitive, and often demonic. The 'Other', while posited as authentic in character, becomes the basis for the development of a Western form (modern dance), which would once again be imposed as culturally superior to other forms of dance. This exemplifies what in Said's words might be the core of Orientalist practice: 'The Orientalist makes it [their] work to be always converting the Orient from something into something else: [they] do so for the sake of [their] own culture [...]' (Said, 1978, p.67).

As modern dance embodied the ideal of a new way of life, it would be manipulated as such within a game of political interest. As Norbert Elias (1996) argues<sup>6</sup>, social struggles in Germany gave power to specific strata that competed with an already economically and culturally established European aristocracy. The latter manipulated the idea of a new culture or way of life in order to promote their own interests into a collective fantasy, that of a German culture which unifies the fragmented social experience of the people in this geographical space. Dance became entangled in the process of Germanisation via the concept of culture (specifically, the lifestyle of the capitalist aristocracy) and represented a vehicle for the construction of a metaphysical entity, the German nation. Accordingly, there emerged discourses on a dance that is specifically German, and hence distinctive of a collective value or aesthetic.

As Banes (1998) argues, ideas of nationhood run in parallel with the development of modern dance. The formation of a national German culture was linked to social and political developments in Europe; that is, the progressive dissolution of the empires and the emergence of nation states with defined borders and populations. Germany is a prime example of this model, never managing to achieve the complexity of cultural and economic power of the French and British empires, while also appearing fragmented at the



beginning of the nineteenth century. As a result, the emergence of a nation state-like Germany entailed the fabrication of a unified nation based on common interest and cultural practices. However, as Elias (2000) contends, the idea of a national common culture significant of the German way of life (what he terms *Kultur*, 'culture') was an ideological mechanism for the unification of internally opposing social powers versus the developed elites of France and the rest of Europe. In fact, this served as a means of social consensus for the capitalist plans of the advancing German middle-class. The intellectual progress and achievements of these new social strata were promoted to a form of culture that unified Germany. These practices were given a spiritual, quasi-metaphysical character that became distinctive of 'German' culture in the wider sense. This reflected on dance production and the concept of a specifically 'German' model of dance, exemplified by the work of Wigman.

'German' dance emerged through a process of refinement, passing from an experimental state (the ritualistic performances in Ascona) to one with specific technique, themes and style, promoted as a national product. Meduri (cited in Reed, 1998, p.508) presents a similar argument in her study of the Indian devadasi dance: she describes the transformation of the form from a pre-colonial practice as a temple-ritual dance into a temple 'prostitute' or 'girl' dance during the nineteenth century, and then into an 'emblem of the nation' in the twentieth. We can trace this process of transformation in the work of Mary Wigman, whose experimental and ritualistic dance works of the 1920s gradually gave way to a more subdued aesthetic in keeping with state guidelines throughout the era of National Socialism (Karina and Kant, 2003).



## Concluding Remarks

In order to accurately chart the development of modern dance in the first decades of the twentieth century, we must acknowledge the presence and influence of the Orientalised 'Other' in the making of dance, and in turn recognise the complicated relationship that exists between Western ideals and the threatening yet enticing allure of the non-geographically-specific 'Other'. The trajectory from the 'Other' as a theme and aesthetic to the national and the nationalistic signifies a deeply rooted correlation between history and bodily movement. Wigman's *Hexentanz II* serves as an indicator of the significance of the non-Western 'Other' at a crucial point in the evolution of the modern dance tradition; it is a conflation of cultural influences as suggested by a Saidian analysis that has marked the process by which Western modern dance would develop and a fraction of which will be viewed as 'German'; one that was created by an artist with a profound curiosity for the non-Western 'Other', while entangled in the political and social developments of the period.

## Notes

1. Descriptions of Wigman's work are derived from research conducted in 2011 by Dr Lucy Weir at the Mary Wigman-Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin. This included photographs, personal essays and letters, and Wigman's extensive choreographic notes.

2. Symbolic oppositions are, in other words, tensions between artistic movements and ideas about the definition and making of dance, its techniques and content.

3. However, this was to change significantly during the Nazi period (Manning, 1993).

4. Habitus: 'a set of historical relations "deposited" within individual bodies in the form of mental and corporeal schemata of perception, appreciation and action' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.16).

5. See: [online video](#)

6. Elias's argument is here used as a thick description of the process of behavioural modification and development of a particular way of being as a result of state formation. However, Elias has received a number of criticisms about his endeavour to discuss a process of cultural development in the West (Van Krieken, 1989; Duerr, 1993 [cited in Van Krieken, 2005]). Duerr (1993, as cited in Van Krieken, 2005) argues that Elias adopts a rather imperialist stance taking the civilising process as a process of achieving superiority. However, our use of Elias here does not assume such a stance, but rather is used to contextualise a process that conceals power relations between the West and the Orient.

Van Krieken (1989) also argues that Elias's analysis is limited in that it closely links state formation, social change and self-restraint without taking into account individualisation, namely individual potential for a sense of self and a type of action that is not as bound by what Elias sees as increased social interdependency especially within the urban setting. Indeed, Elias views structural macro-processes as all too powerful and individuals within these as lacking the potential for resistance. Although this discussion falls outwith the scope of this text, we do not wish to see Wigman's work as a mere reflection of this process but rather see the making of *Hexentanz II* as informed by these wider phenomena.

Van Krieken (1989) also argues that bureaucracy, which he sees as distinct from state formation, has not been adequately taken into account in Elias's work. He argues that behavioural modification has been further enforced by bureaucratic organisation, which is linked to the centralisation of authority and the development of rules around tasks and obligations. However, in *Court Society* (1983), Elias does describe processes of rationalisation and compartmentalisation of tasks and duties, which can be seen as primary references to bureaucratisation. Also, in his discussion of German culture in *The civilizing process* (2000), Elias indicates that values around rational organisation of production and efficiency are very much signs of bureaucratic organisation, as Weber also describes it (See Gerth and Mills, 1991), and were indicative of the construction of a distinctive, yet class specific, habitus of the German capitalist aristocracy. For the purposes of this article, what we draw on mostly is Elias's idea of a social process of class formation and interest as a part of a state formation which reflects to some extent on the making of dance in this period, especially on the level of ideology and, in the end, nationalist ideology and institutional production.

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